The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matter affecting labor, occurring in the legislative, executive and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

Entered as second-class matter September 30, 1912, at the Post-Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Sec. 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 11, 1918.

AGITATE! EDUCAT OR ORGANIZE!

VOL. 14, NO. 41. WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1924. WHOLE NO. 716.

GOMPERS EULOGIZED BY U. S. SENATORS

Washington, Dec. 27.—The late Samuel Gompers was eulogized last week on the floor of the senate by Senators Dill, Norris, Stanley and Heflin.

Senator Dill said that Mr. Gompers "wrought such profound changes in the economic and industrial life of this country that the American people had come to consider him almost as an institution."

"He stood always for the weak and the poor who were forced to live lives of toil, but he compelled the respect of those to whom he was opposed."

Senator Dill said that unorganized labor profited as much, "and often more," than union men as a result of the fights Mr. Gompers made.

"He always maintained," said Senator Dill, "that he was fighting the battles of all who toil, whether they belonged to unions or not, and today the better working conditions of non-union labor, as well as union labor, are directly traceable to the work done by Mr. Gompers in the past 40 years.

"The greatest service to those who toil was his successful struggle to secure acceptance by the general public of his contention that labor is not a commodity, but a human thing. Labor can not be separated from those who perform it.

"Another reason why it is fitting that some words be spoken of him in this chamber is that he has been a tremendous influence in the political life of the country. For more than a quarter of a century he helped to elect and defeat more members of both houses and senate than any other individual in the nation. These fights were not personal fights. They were labor fights."

Senator Norris referred to the death of Mr. Gompers as "the passing of one of the great characters of our age."

U. S. EMPLOYES GAIN AFTER THEY ORGANIZE

Washington, Dec. 27.—Federal employes should contrast working conditions now and before the National Federation of Federal Employes was formed, President Stewart of that organization in referring to gains this union has secured for all federal employes.

Before these workers united there was not one benefit of general application in more than 30 years. Working hours were increased, but compensation was not changed. Every effort to secure a retirement law was defeated and sick leaves were reduced.

"After organization, these employes won their first victory by defeating the Borland bill which would lengthen the work day.

"Three salary bonuses, reaching $240 annually, were secured. Under the reclassification bill this was added to the basic salary. Efforts to reduce this bonus have been defeated, and $275,000,000 additional has been secured for federal employes within the District of Columbia and for the field service.

"The retirement law, with a maximum annuity of $60 a month, replaces the policy of dropping employes when they reach 70 for those regardless of their service.

The Sterling-Lehlbach act provides for classification of civil service.

Amendment to the United States compensation act granting compensation to those suffering on account of disease contracted, as well as injuries sustained while in the performance of duty.

"Contrast these gains in less than 10 years, with conditions under the 'unorganized system,' said President Steward. He declared that the organized federal employes are "marching on." The union has just chartered its three hundred and first local.

LEASING OF CONVICTS OPPOSED IN MISSOURI

Jefferson City, Mo., Dec. 27.—The state federation of labor has issued a call to trade unionists and sympathizers for an anti-convict leasing conference, to be held in this city January 6. It is proposed to draft certain amendments to be presented to the next legislature for enactment into law that will prevent convict labor competing with free labor.

The call says that through close co-operation between prison officials and prison contractors, the 1917 law, which provides for the abolition of this system, has been evaded with impunity and thereby caused the continuance of the brutal leasing system in violation of the spirit of the law."

RAILROADS WANT TIME

Washington, Dec. 27.—The Lehigh Valley railroad has asked the interstate commerce commission for an extension of time to install automatic train control. It stated that the road will make a similar request. The commission has set January 7 as the date for the equipment. The roads have resisted the order on the ground that this development is yet in its infancy.

MORE POWER FOR EXECUTIVE

Washington, Dec. 27.—Congressman Hastings of Oklahoma has introduced a constitutional amendment which would empower the president to veto any item in an appropriation bill passed by congress.

CONSCRIPTION OF WORKERS, BUT NOT PROFIT, IS FAVORED

Washington, Dec. 27.—While the public is led to believe that congress is considering the conscription of labor and capital in the next war, the lawmakers, as a rule, are considering nothing of the kind. What they favor is the conscription of labor and merely the reduction of profits for the business man.

The youth of the land will be conscripted and paid $30 a month, but capital will not be conscripted. Instead, the government will say to the owners of these industrial plants: "You must be moderate in your profit demands."

Most of the lawmakers who talk of the need for "everybody making sacrifices" seem to be under the impression that a young man who risks his life in the front line trenches is making no greater sacrifice than the business man whose profit is limited to 3 per cent. The business man will be permitted, of course, to make substantial allowance for new equipment he may install, for depreciation, for interest and for other charges. These are all outside of his profit.

Gompers Called "Frontiersman" By Orator In Brilliant Eulogy

New York, Dec. 27.—At the funeral service of Samuel Gompers in Elks' hall, this city, Rabbi Wise delivered a brilliant eulogy on the life and character of the departed trade unionist.

"Among all the characterizations of Samuel Gompers I have come upon," said Dr. Wise, "none is more fitting than 'frontiersman.' For Samuel Gompers was a pioneer, rugged rather than suave, firm rather than conventional. Pioneer was he in the military sense, for he was the militant mood and throughout his life he was a battler. As a pioneer Gompers fought for a great cause, not for a larger wage or added comfort, but for a freer and fuller life for the toilers of the nation—which could not be without these instrumentalities of life and freedom.

"He had all the ruggedness and courage, but he had more than the moderation of the pioneer. His was the moderation of the highest courage, rather than the immoderateness of the lower daring. Iconoclast he seemed to those blinded with the every generation contest the forward march of the workers to the larger life.

"Concentrating upon and consecrated to his purpose, he was unlike the pioneer in that he was a man of more than one ideal and more than one loyalty. Long will men remember the ardor with which he championed the cause of international peace, seeking it on high grounds and for the highest ends.

"His was the unselfishness of the pioneer, the man who plans and builds for others, who deems himself the instrument and servant of that higher purpose in which he unswervingly believes. His was the integrity of the pioneer, unstained and unchallengeable, the integrity of the man who puts his cause first and himself last, the man who counts nothing worth while save the triumph of the issue to which he has devoted himself.

"The life of this frontiersman of industrial freedom seemed one of marvelous, even heroic proportions, when it is borne in mind that from the beginning to the end of his years of his leadership he stood like a lone unafraid against outlawry, attempted always—and effective sometimes—against organized labor.

"Withall, he was lawful and honorable, yes, more truly lawful and honorable in his dealings than the technically lawful oppressors of organized labor.

"Serving most the cause of organized labor, he best served America. For the organization of the workers of America is no less truly a democratic and even spiritual achievement than the founding of a mighty industry or the leadership of a successful financial institution.

"Patriot was he in battling for the freedom and self-determination for the workers, that they might be not 'least of men,' but fellowship of our American democracy.

"Of Lincoln it was said that he was such a man as freedom owns how to make. We name Samuel Gompers such a man as America knew how to remake, how to refashion to its lofty uses. America remade this immigrant lad, even as America has taken multitudes of immigrant sons and daughters and won by virtue of its kindling genius and their eager hearts to the interested devotion of service to American purposes.

"What romance and wonder is his story. It is the story, an American career, an American epic."

OVERHEAD COSTS MUST BE LOWERED

New York, Dec. 27.—High overhead costs must be lowered and the number of useless officials must be reduced, says the Annalist, financial paper, published in this city.

Cost sheets must be relieved of the unproductive charges of excessive plant, equipment and personnel, this paper says.

"The problem is now fairly in the consciousness of business. But the old puzzle of 'Who will bell the cat?' is as difficult to answer as ever.

ABANDON SEVEN-DAY WEEK

Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, Dec. 27.—A referendum in this city, and in Edmonton and Medicine Hat has resulted in the abandonment of the seven-day week for municipal fire fighters. Calgary was the only city that declared against the shorter week.

The units of the International Association of Fire Fighters, affiliated to the A. F. of L., related to this city, in the trade union movement in these cities, led the fight for a shorter work week.

TAMPA OVERCROWDED

Tampa, Fla., Dec. 27.—The united charities announce that this city is overcrowded with employment seekers. A widely advertised real estate boom is responsible for this situation.

Railroad's Excessive Repair Costs Is Censured by Federal Board

Washington, Dec. 27.—An investigation by the interstate commerce commission shows that the Erie railroad has paid more money for repairing locomotives than the total reproduction cost of a new locomotive.

These excess expenditures were made in 1920 to 1923, when the Erie contracted its work to private controlled shops so it could get outside the jurisdiction of the railroad labor board. This practice was followed by other roads during that period.

The commission refused to accept the railroad's claim that insufficient capacity of its shops compelled it to patronage the private shops.

The commission shows that the Baldwin locomotive company was paid an excess of $172,000 for repairing eight locomotives in October, 1920. Other contracts showed that for every dollar of productive labor applied, the Erie paid sums ranging from $3.75 to $4.95. It was pointed out that the total cost of applied, or productive, labor on 12 locomotives repaired at one private plant was $144,359.74 and the amount added to productive labor for indirect labor, overheads and charges was $507,209.66.

"The cost of repairs to many of the locomotives was greatly in excess of the cost of similar new locomotives," the commission declared. A table was given covering 12 locomotives repaired at the Crucible steel plant showing the average cost of repairs was $64,857, the average original cost of the locomotives but $14,739, and the average cost of new similar locomotives $36,459.

The commission said that these records compel it to regard the Erie expenditures as "imprudent."

Charges have been made by opponents of the railroad interests that there has been deliberate waste by the carriers for the purpose of covering up the actual financial condition of the railroads, so that high rates would be maintained, and that certain large financial interests controlled the carriers and also the outside shops to which repair work was let at exorbitant terms.

WILLIAM GREEN IS CHOSEN A. F. OF L. PRESIDENT

MARKETS AND PROFITS IS PRO-JAPANESE URGE

Washington, Dec. 27.—Pro-Japanese in this country continue their propaganda against the passage of the Oriental exclusion act by the last congress. These American citizens use the same arguments as Japanese statesmen, who insist that their nation has been discriminated against.

The act passed by congress debars all Orientals. The United States has not singled out Japanese from any other Oriental peoples, but the Japanese and their champions in the United States insist Japan be accorded favored treatment over China, Korea and other far-east countries. While Japan objects to the exclusion policy of the United States, that country debars Koreans and Chinese from Japan.

One of the great aids to the pro-Japanese movement in this country is the business element that maintains trade relations with Japan. This influence ignores racial, economic and social effects of yellow immigration.

The American business men would block Japanese interests that are using present conditions to develop an anti-American sentiment in the far east by having the United States admit Japanese while debarring other orientals. The business interests of neither country are impelled by patriotic motives.

The following Associated Press cable from Tokio last June shows how markets and profits are involved in this issue:

"More sordid motives than those of patriotism are backing the anti-American agitation which has followed enactment in the United States of an immigration law barring Japanese, in the opinion of government officials and business men here.

"According to statements made by them today, the agitation is being supported by certain Japanese business men and manufacturers who desire to eliminate foreign competition in the Japanese markets and who have seized the situation created by passage of the exclusion provision as a means to that end."

PORTO RICANS ASK ELECTION INQUIRY

Washington, Dec. 27.—A committee representing Porto Rican citizens charge gross frauds, violence and corruption in the last elections and that Porto Rico, by mal-administration, has been reduced to a state of bankruptcy. Detailed charges of the alleged election frauds will be included in a petition to congress. The memorial forwarded to the president deals mainly with the island's finances and waste of public money.

It is stated that millions of dollars in favorable trade balances have been gradually reduced until this year an unfavorable balance occurred for the first time in 15 years.

"The bonds should be sold, no more debts should be incurred by the island," the protest asserts, "until our finances are heard and investigated. This criminal expenditure of the people's money should be promptly stopped."

The document questions the accuracy of statements in the governor's annual report, which explains increases in the budgets for 1923 and 1924, as due to the fact that in 1922 no money was spent on public works, road extension or maintenance, nor were necessary public buildings constructed or necessary repairs made.

BANKERS' COMMISSION TOTALS $1,000,000

Washington, Dec. 27.—A bankers' commission of nearly $1,000,000 in a deal that involved the merging of southwestern roads was considered by the interstate commerce commission. Then the commission voted to allow the claim.

The charge fee was divided between three New York financial houses. A minority of the commission opposed the allowance.

Mr. Campbell declared that he could not sanction "a transaction which is to be consummated by the long hundreds of thousands of dollars belonging to security holders, which, if it is to be recovered at all, will have to be recovered at the expense of the shipping public."

LARGE SUGAR PROFITS

New York, Dec. 27.—The annual report for Fajardo sugar company of Porto Rico shows a net profit of $1,344,511, after all expenses and charges for maintenance and depreciation are paid. This is a gain of $130,000 over the previous year.

The mills of the company are operated along the same debasing lines as those of Porto Rico sugar plants. Low wages, long hours and poor working conditions are the rule.

FAKE PATENT "LAWYERS"

Washington, Dec. 27.—In his annual report Commissioner of Patents Robertson called attention to fake patent "lawyers" in this city who advertise in magazines and who fleece investors of thousands of dollars every year. Because they are not registered these "lawyers" are not under the supervision of the patent office. A bill, pending in congress, would penalize non-registered "lawyers."

ANTI-UNION PAPER "GOES TO THE WALL"

Buffalo, N. Y., Dec. 27.—The Buffalo Commercial has changed ownership and the new proprietors have signed an agreement with the Typographical union. The name of this publication is no odious to the people of this city that it, too, has been discarded with its anti-union policy, and is now known as the Post.

William McCone, manager of the Commercial, is not connected with the new paper. This individual was given momentary publicity a few years ago when he sold a congressional committee in Washington that the Typographical union, through a policy of "terrorization," dictates the editorial utterances of the newspapers of this country that operate union composing rooms.

EDUCATE CHILDREN TO STOP ILLITERACY

Atlanta, Ga., Dec. 27.—Teaching adults to read and write will not wipe out illiteracy in this state, declares Jerome Jones, editor of the Journal of Labor.

The Georgia illiteracy commission has found that more than 66,000 native white persons over 10 years of age in this state who are unable to read or write, while the colored illiterates number more than 260,000.

The commission proposes that illiteracy be removed by teaching reading and writing. This is good as far as it goes, but it is not a solution, said Editor Jones. He says that Georgia is turning out illiterates at the rate of 25,000 a year.

"In other words, we fill the hopper about as fast as we empty it. Why wait until a person is 21 to teach him to read and write, while the colored illiterates number more than 260,000.

Figures issued by the state superintendent of education indicate that the illiteracy of the white race were not enrolled in any school in 1922, and of those enrolled less than 250,000 could attend more than six months in the year.

"Educate the present school generation and illiteracy will disappear in one generation," the labor editor said.

OPPOSE EIGHT-HOUR DAY

Vancouver, B. C., Dec. 27.—Employers told a sorrowful story to the board appointed by the legislature to administer the eight-hour law in the province. The board was told that the employers assured the board that industry is on the verge of ruin and that capitalists are facing the poor house because of the shorter work day. The worst economic crisis from the law's operation. None of them would admit there is anything wrong with the law's principle, they can reduce waste.

The pleas of some of these employers were laughable. One ship builder said that by living in barges for the grain-carrying trade is specialized work of the highest order and it can be done efficiently only by working long hours. This employer, acting on a suggestion by the employers' representative on the board, declared that if he is not exempt from the law, he will ignore it. The employers' representative previously advised employers to violate the act if it interfered with profits.

WIN SHORTER HOURS

Chicago, Dec. 27.—The federal court of appeals has upheld the Santa Fe railroad to limit the workday of its yardmasters to nine hours. The suit was first heard and investigated. The road was charged with violating the United States law that is intended to promote the welfare of railroad employes and travelers.

State Official Scores Child Labor; North Carolina Ignores Workers

Raleigh, N. C., Dec. 27.—Strong recommendation for child labor legislation is made by M. L. Shipman, commissioner of the state department of labor and printing, in his annual report.

Last August the North Carolina state legislature almost unanimously rejected the federal child labor amendment. The North Carolina cotton manufacturers association has taken the same position.

"The vigorous and rapid growth of industry in the state of North Carolina is too well known to require comment," said Commissioner Shipman. "In startling contrast to this industrial development is the backward state of legislation in behalf of the workers who are its basic necessity.

"The employment of children at such early ages to the extent as to interfere with their physical and mental development is bad business and bad morals. Thirty-three states have enacted laws requiring work days for children in industry shorter than that fixed by statute in North Carolina, and the laws of practically all other industrial states prohibit night work for women. There is in this connection a responsibility devolved upon the legislature which has not yet been fully met. The future of the state demands better protection for both the children and the women employed in its industries, and legislation to this end is strongly recommended."

The report calls for "at least a beginning" in the application of the eight-hour day for the more hazardous and wearing occupations.

"North Carolina is one of but six states of the union lacking a law providing for the compensation of industrial injuries. The old rule of common law, that the burden of the risk, for the creation of which he is not and can not be primarily responsible, has been set aside in 42 states and practically every foreign country. Its injustice condemns it, and its short-sighted economic policy is a war with both humanitarian and business standards.

"The crippled men or bereaved and orphaned households are a reproach and a burden to the community which fails to make provision for their welfare. Their misfortune befalls in the attempt to serve the community through industry; the cost of their care is a just charge on the industry, without the bickering and conflict and wastefulness of a suit at law."

James P. Noonan, Electrical Workers, Completes Executive Council

New York, Dec. 27.—At a meeting held in this city the A. F. of L. executive council elected William Green president of the A. F. of L. to succeed the late Samuel Gompers. Mr. Green was third vice president of the A. F. of L. and secretary-treasurer of the United Mine Workers.

James P. Noonan, president of the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, was chosen to fill the vacancy caused by the advancement of Mr. Green.

The new president is 51 years of age. His home is in Coschocton, Ohio. He is of English-Welsh parentage. He has served as secretary-treasurer of the United Mine Workers since 1913, and has been active in the cause of organized labor for 33 years. He served four years in the Ohio state senate, where he sponsored the present Ohio workmen's compensation law. This act has placed the state in charge of compensation for industrial deaths and injuries and has made it impossible for the private liability companies to do business in Ohio. The law is used as a model by the A. F. of L. in urging the passage of compensation legislation in other states and in the District of Columbia.

Mr. Noonan has been president of the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers for six years. He was vice president for 13 years and has been a member of his union since its inception. Last year he, together with Timothy Healy, president of the International Brotherhood of Stationary Firemen and Oilers, represented the A. F. of L. at the world superpower conference, held in London. During the Spanish-American war Mr. Noonan served as a regular army artillery man in Cuba and the Philippines.

Messrs. Green and Noonan are stanch trade unionists and are rigid adherents to the belief that the workers' road to a better day is through education and organization.

LAND SPECULATORS STOP FARM PROGRESS

Foley, Ala., Dec. 27.—This section of Alabama has come to a standstill because of land speculators, the editor of the Foley Onlooker declares.

"Men bought land here for as low as 50 cents an acre, and that is what a number of the big holdings cost. These men have set back and let us pioneers come in here and build up the county for them, build roads, communities and schools, and struggle with the marketing situation. They have sat back and looked on, occasionally advancing the value of their land until today it is priced as high as $75 an acre, stumpage land, that would have to be cleared.

"This land, that was obtained for 50 cents an acre, has not cost the holders more than from $2 to $5 in taxation all these years, if that much. And they have turpentined the trees in and cut off the timber.

"The land speculator gives in his property at a value of $5 to $10 an acre, and it is taxed at a rate of 60 per cent of the value. He puts a value of $40 to $75 an acre on it if he wishes to sell. A man buys 20 or 40 acres, clears it and puts a fence around it, erects buildings and joins us in the building up of our county. In return he is taxed at the rate of $40 or more an acre. Why tax progressiveness?

"A more just equalization will have to come about.

"The speculators' taxes will have to be increased according to the value he places on his land when he wishes to sell it or the improved property tax will have to be reduced to a level that held by speculators. Now which of these two is it possible to do?"

UNITED STATES CAN DEPORT

New York, Dec. 27.—The United States court of appeals has ruled that the government can deport draft obstructors who were pardoned by President Harding after serving part of their sentences.

Judges Rogers and Hough held that the men would have been legally liable to deportation if they had served their sentences and that the president's pardoning power is ineffective in this case, because the status of the prisoners is governed by a legislative act which the executive can not pardon out of existence, the court held. Judge Hand dissented from this opinion.

COAL STRIKE IN SPRING FAVORED BY OPERATORS

Indianapolis, Dec. 27.—The average miner knows that if he worked for nothing, there would be no more coal sold, Ellis Searles, editor of the United Mine Workers' Journal, writes in discussing the plan of bituminous coal owners to force a strike.

"If' develops that certain soft coal operators are unable to make profits that they thought they should make, are seeking some other way to garner big dividends. To this end they are hopefully working toward a general strike in the industry next April," Editor Searles said.

"President Lewis is cognizant of this situation. The United Mine Workers has no organization is aware of it. The only other alternative to a strike is a reduction of wages to the 1917 level—which means a cut of 30 per cent or more below the prevailing scale.

"If the effort, led by the non-union crew of soft coal producers, is successful, it means that a general drive against wages will be made in other basic industries will follow.

"But the miners are going to stand pat on the agreement signed at Jacksonville. The average miner is of the opinion that if he has to starve to death he will starve in the midst of those who wish to starve him.

"There is just so much coal consumed in the course of a year and nothing will induce extra sales.

"But if the non-union coal operators could force a shutdown next year in some of the organized fields it would enable other producers to profit by the local shortage through raising prices and give all producers a chance to build up their profits when the mines did resume. It's a neat little scheme to plunder the public and make the union coal miner pay the bill. It should not be permitted to pass unchallenged."

CONVICT LEASING UPHELD BY COURT

Oklahoma City, Okla., Dec. 27.—The supreme court of this state has ruled that the proposed contract for the state department of affairs and the Cherokee manufacturing company is not a violation of the Oklahoma constitution which says: "The contracting of convict labor is hereby prohibited."

The court held that the contract sought to be entered into is not "contracting of convict labor." The court of affairs announces that it will immediately put the contract into effect.

Organized labor will continue its fight against this wrong. The workers' agitation forced the state to cancel a contract with the Reliance manufacturing company, the recognized prison labor trust of this country, which has contracts in several states for the manufacture of cheap shirts.

After the Reliance contract was abrogated, state officials signed another contract with the Cherokee concern, a dummy that has been set up by the Reliance corporation.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC SETTLES

San Francisco, Dec. 27.—As a result of a strike declaration by 96 per cent of its employees, the Southern Pacific railroad has raised wages of those workers $500,000 a year, dating back to October 1. The strike vote is now being taken, the chairman of the railroad's executive committee carelessly waived it aside with the statement that the brotherhood committee consisting of nine men to vote, that they might have a club to force the Howell-Barkley bill through congress. When the strike vote was announced, railroad officials refused to comment.

Simultaneous with the wage increase announcement, Southern Pacific stated that in the last ten months all records have been smashed for train operations. During this period, percentage of locomotives to trains were cut down and the locomotive load raised.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS COSTLY

Washington, Dec. 27.—Traffic accidents in this country mean an annual economic loss of $3,000,000,000, declared Secretary Hoover in opening the national conference on street and highway safety. Last year's traffic toll was 21,600 deaths and 678,000 serious personal injuries.

$60 PER CENT DIVIDEND

New York, Dec. 27.—Trustees of the International securities trust of America have declared a 200 per cent stock dividend.